RAT RACE

December 7, 1940 - Fourth Draft

WGA@490621

RAT RACE by Amy Heckerling
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FADE IN:

CREDITS OVER

INT. MAZE - DAY

"UNDER PRESSURE" by Queen PLAYS. We see a WHITE LAB RAT scurrying around, trying to get to the cheese.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVERHEAD ONTO FREEWAYS - DAY

Cars race to work.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A bell RINGS and a RAT runs to a food hatch to get dinner.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE ELEVATORS - DAY

The red light over an elevator lights up, a bell RINGS and a crowd of workers run to an elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT is on a treadmill. We see his tiny paws running in place.

CUT TO:

EXT. CROWDED CITY - STREET Lots of legs walking quickly to work. We continue with a series of rats in labs, and people at work, shots until the end of credits.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY - STOCK FOOTAGE

A BEAR catches fish while her cubs look on.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Most of the skills necessary to survival are taught to us by our parents.

CUT TO:

REINDEER lock antlers and fight as baby deer watch.

CUT TO:

BEAVERS work on a dam as their babies watch.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A TODDLER reaches to touch a stove.

MOTHER
(in babytalk)
No, no, hot, hot.

She touches the stove to demonstrate and burns herself.

MOTHER
OW! SHIT!

The toddler looks happy.

TODDLER
(proudly)
SHIT!

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
It's at this early phase of "learning from parents" very powerful, but not always helpful associations are made.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A young girl, Lisa, makes a ridiculous face.

MOTHER
Lisa, one day your face is gonna freeze like that and you'll look like an idiot your whole life.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A boy, Rick, finishes his sandwich and gets up to go in the ocean.

MOTHER
Rick, don't go in the water yet, you'll get cramps and drown.

INT. BACKSEAT OF 1960'S CAR - DAY

A little boy, Bruce, listens to his father ranting in the front seat.

FATHER O.S.
"The Almighty Buck," that's all anyone gives a damn about.

CUT TO:

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
As we get older our knowledge comes from other sources such as television...

ON A TELEVISION We see quick CLIPS from 1960's and 70's COMMERCIALS... Women overly enthusiastic about clean floors, sparkling toilets, or their husband's collars, people panicky about bodily functions and odors.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A little GIRL sings jingles to her dolls.

GIRL
"We girls can do anything, right Barbie...?"

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
...or our friends.

A group of TEENAGE BOYS converse.

TEENAGE BOY
Women like it if you treat them like shit.

ANOTHER BOY
They respect you for it.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN
...and, occasionally we even learn something in school...

A dull TEACHER lectures.

TEACHER
The main export of Columbia is coffee.

A little BOY rolls his eyes.

KID
Right.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

The Voice belongs to DOCTOR SHAWN (a Wally Shawn-type). He is intelligent and exuberant. His lab is equipped with white rats, cages, mazes and Skinner boxes.

DOCTOR SHAWN
In eighteen fifty-nine Charles Darwin proposes that man has descended from the ape, and so we begin the use of animals to study human beings.

CUT TO:

BLACK-AND-WHITE FOOTAGE from the early 1900's of scientists working with salivating dogs, pigeons pushing levers, cats getting neurotic, etc.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Dogs, cats, pigeons and rats have helped us understand and even predict our own behavior.
(MORE)

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O. (cont'd)
For example...

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "AGGRESSION"

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT stands on a grid (that can be electrified) in a cage divided into two parts.

DOCTOR SHAWN
In this experiment a rat is exposed to an electrical shock...

We hear a BUZZING sound. The rat jumps through the divider to the other side.

DOCTOR SHAWN
He learns to run through an escape hatch and avoid the pain.

The escape hatch is closed. The rat is SHOCKED again.

DOCTOR SHAWN
But when the escape route is closed the rat becomes upset, his fur becomes matted and his heartbeat speeds up...

The rat's vital statistics are measured.

DOCTOR SHAWN
He turns his fear and anger in on himself, destroying his own body.

A second rat is placed in the cage with him.

DOCTOR SHAWN
But what happens when a second rat is introduced?

The BUZZER goes off, the TWO RATS fight until the shock is over.

DOCTOR SHAWN
Rats in painful environments fight with each other, and oddly enough, after the same or even greater shocks, the fighting rats are perfectly fine.
(MORE)

DOCTOR SHAWN (cont'd)
Their blood pressure is low and their coats are lustrous.

We see vital statistics of happy rats being taken.

DOCTOR SHAWN
The rats have prevented themselves from getting sick by fighting.

He puts the rat back into a cage.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat gets put inside, but it is a pet cage not a lab cage. In the background we see two boys playing.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - 1970'S - DAY

BRUCE, nine years old, and his younger brother DAVID are playing "Indians." They accidentally knock over a vase. Their FATHER rushes in.

FATHER
Who did that?

BRUCE & DAVID
He did!

DAVID
Bruce did it, I swear.

BRUCE
You LIAR!

Father grabs Bruce and pulls him away.

FATHER
What did I tell you about fighting in the living room?

BRUCE
I didn't do nothing, he started it.

Father smacks his face a few times.

BRUCE
It was David, it was him, why're you always picking on me?

Father stops and looks at him seriously.

FATHER
Because you're the older one, you should know better. Go to your room.

BRUCE
That's not fair.

FATHER
Go!

Bruce looks so angry and upset that he is practically in tears. David gives him a superior look as Bruce leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce stomps around the room - frustrated. We hear the BUZZING sound signifying electrical shock.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT - (ACTUALLY A SCALED-DOWN REPLICA)

The BUZZING continues. A RAT (wearing the same Indian hat as Bruce) twitches from the SHOCKS.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE AND DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Without an outlet for our aggressions, we simply couldn't function.

David ENTERS, unaware Bruce is standing on the bed, waiting for him. He pounces on him and starts beating him. When he stops fighting Bruce is exhausted but relaxed looking.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB

A RAT has his blood pressure taken, it is normal.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Then armed with these survival techniques, we go out into the world.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. FREEWAY - DAY

A MAN-SIZED RAT in a suit and sunglasses drives his Porsche while yelling on his car phone.

CLOSE ON RAT

RAT
We're fucked, our whole fucking department is fucked. A bunch of 'em were taking a tour of our offices, what the hell does that tell you? Johnson's is taking over Youthquake and I'm going to lose my fucking job, I just know it, Ma.

CUT TO:

LONG SHOT OF CARS...

The car in front of the Porsche isn't going fast enough because the DRIVER is eating. The Rat BANGS on his horn until the slower car moves to another lane. Back to Driver, it is no longer a Rat, but Bruce (in the same outfit). He has grown up to be a very explosive young man. He yells at the driver of the slower car.

BRUCE
That's the breakfast lane, asshole.

DRIVER
Ah, shut up.

Bruce looks aggravated. He speeds up, gets in front of the other car, then slows down to a crawl. He checks his rearview mirror to make sure he has upset the other driver, then he seems to relax. We pull back and see Dr. Shawn sitting next to him.

DOCTOR SHAWN
Now Bruce is able to relax. The possibility of losing his job puts him in a state of anxiety. The slow-moving car threatens to make him late for work, another jolt to his system. The man in the Buick is in no way responsible for the recession or Bruce's lack of job security, but by annoying him the shock is relieved.

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT pulls on a handle.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
A rat can be taught to pull a lever to obtain a "reward"... in this case a food pellet.

A food pellet drops down and a bell RINGS. The rat chews merrily.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "INCONSISTENT REWARDS"

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S PARENTS KITCHEN - 1960'S

Lisa is a six-year-old character. Her parents and their friends watch as she re-enacts a scene from "The Honeymooners." As she finishes they burst into applause. Lisa is glowing. We hear the reward bell RINGING.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP

A lever is pushed and a food pellet drops out.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN
If the food is sure to come out every time he pulls the lever, the rat will pull only when he's hungry. But when the reward is "inconsistent," when sometimes he gets a food pellet and sometimes doesn't... what happens?

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa, now thirteen, is in a bikini and has painted herself brown. She looks in the mirror as she belts out a soul song. Her mother comes in.

MOTHER
LISA, LOWER THE MUSIC!
(she sees her)
Oh, my God! What did you do to yourself?

LISA
(frightened)
It's washable, Ma.

Shoving her towards the bathroom.

MOTHER
You could give yourself skin poisoning! You're going to be all broken out.

LISA
Maa...

MOTHER
Don't 'MA' me, you just wash that off and finish your homework, enough of this wasting time.

LISA
I'm not wasting time. I'm acting. Homework is wasting time. I'm going to be an actress, not a mathematician.

MOTHER
You're going to be an idiot from what I see.

Her mother leaves. Lisa throws herself on the bed and has a pre-teen tantrum.

LISA
I AM going to be an actress.
You'll see. You'll all see.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat continues to push the lever, even though nothing comes out.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Oddly enough, when the rat doesn't know if the food pellet will come, he pushes on the lever much more frequently.

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Lisa gets APPLAUSE.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT
Lisa throws herself on the bed in despair.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
In fact, the more uncertain the reward, the more he wants it... even if he's not hungry.

CUT TO:

Many fast cuts of her throwing herself on the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat pushes the lever desperately.

CUT TO:

AUDITION MONTAGE

Lisa is an attractive woman who looks like she'd try anything to please. Over "ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST" by Queen we see...

INT. CASTING DIRECTOR'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Lisa sits with a crowd of statuesque model-types. She looks at them uncomfortably, then looks down at her own resume without much hope.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ANOTHER CASTING OFFICE - DAY

Lisa is studying a few pages of dialogue. The other applicants are all older women.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat pushes the lever and gets nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Lisa sits on a couch with a few HUMAN-SIZED RATS. They hold resumes, portfolios or copies of "Variety."

CUT TO:

Shots of Lisa's 8x10 handed over to many secretaries.

Shots of rat hitting the lever.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - TELEVISION

Lisa is in a scene where she is on the phone, laughing through her tears. The Phone Company Logo comes up over her face.

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S DUMPY APARTMENT - NIGHT

A crowd of her friends burst into APPLAUSE as the commercial ends. Lisa is passing out food, she pauses to take a bow with a flourish.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The food pellet finally drops out and the rat grabs it. The SONG ENDS.

TITLE CARD - "LEARNED HELPLESSNESS"

INT. CAGE - DAY

We hear BUZZING.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
A rat is given an electrical shock that he can't control or escape...

The rat scampers around the cage, realizes he's trapped, then stops and stands still.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
The rat learns that nothing he does will change the bad feelings...so he does nothing.

The rat is put in another cage with an open door and shocked.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
When this rat is put in a cage that has an escape hatch, he makes no attempt to escape shocks. He has learned to be helpless.

The rat remains still even though the door is in his view.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

MOURNERS are leaving a funeral and heading for their cars. They say goodby to the widow, who holds onto her two children, RICK, eight, and his younger sister. We SWISH PAN over to Dr. Shawn (like Rod Serling in the "Twilight Zone") who is walking in the graveyard.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
In humans the same effect is achieved when the subjects are given unsolvable problems...

Mourners approach Rick and talk to him.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
...when they are assigned tasks that are actually impossible.

MOURNER NUMBER ONE
You're the man of the house now, Rick.

Rick looks concerned.

MOURNER NUMBER TWO
You help your mother, you hear?

Rick nods, worried.

MOURNER NUMBER THREE
You'll have to take care of everyone now.

RICK
But I can't drive!

Rick looks panic stricken.

TEENAGE GIRL V.O.
Things can change. It's all up to us.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A group of young TEENAGE ACTIVISTS are holding a meeting. Rick is one of those kids whose hair is long, but it looks like it doesn't want to be.

TEENAGE BOY
If I didn't think that, I wouldn't be here. All I'm saying is we have to deal with one issue at a time. If we're marching against the war, let's not dilute it.

All the teenagers talk at once.

BLACK GIRL
What about the lack of Blacks in our textbooks?

OTHER GIRL
How can you separate the issues?

OTHER GUY
We should deal with that, too, but at another time.

UPSET GUY
You don't know what you're talking about.

Rick is listening and getting more and more frustrated.

RICK
What does it matter how many issues we march for? It doesn't do any good.

The others are shocked. They all voice their opinions.

GIRL
We can't sit back and be apathetic.

ANOTHER GIRL
That's the attitude that got us into a war no wants to begin with.

UPSET GUY
If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

RICK
(impassioned)
But come on...we're not part of any solution. We're just high school students, it doesn't matter what we think about Asia or Black History, or Womens' Rights or anything. Who cares if we go to school or march around with peace signs. We're not doing anything important. What we think doesn't matter. We just don't count.

Rick has managed to dampen everyone's spirits. They remain silent and look depressed.

CUT TO:

EXT. YOUTHQUAKE BUILDING - DAY

A modern trendy-looking structure which is the corporate headquarters of a large COSMETIC COMPANY. Bruce's Porsche goes down to the employee parking lot.

BRUCE V.O.
...Hold on, I'm heading into the lot, I'm gonna lose you.

INT. OUTER OFFICES - DAY

Bruce walks through and a GUY joins him.

GUY
Hey, you hear, they announced the merger with Johnsons.

BRUCE
What'd I tell you. I told you that in August.

GUY
Now what do you think's gonna happen? You think they're going to get rid of alot of people?

BRUCE
I don't know what you're whining about. They make cotton balls, we make cosmetics. You're in eye makeup, unless you're a total fuck-up they'll keep you. But me, I'm in sun care, they've got their own line of sunblock, I'm the only one who gets screwed in this whole, lousy deal. How do I do it?

GUY
Gold loves you, you'll be fine.

BRUCE
Great, as if Gold still had a job.

The Guy goes off to his own office.

BRUCE
(when the guy's out of earshot)
Schmuck.

Bruce gets to his office and stops by his SECRETARY.

BRUCE'S SECRETARY
I couldn't get you into Patina tonight.

BRUCE
(totally upset)
WHHHHYYY!?

BRUCE'S SECRETARY
Unless you want to go earlier.

BRUCE
What good is that? This really sucks. I'm going to look stupid.

He tosses down his messages.

BRUCE
You better find me someplace else.

BRUCE'S SECRETARY
(unimpressed)
How about Sizzler?

BRUCE
Ha ha.

He sees another SECRETARY come out of an office holding a memo. He grabs her waist and pulls her into...

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

SECRETARY
Bruce, cut it out.

She tries (not too hard) to break away from him.

BRUCE
You're doing it again, you wore those stockings just to drive me insane.

SECRETARY
What're you talking about?

He picks up her leg.

BRUCE
Seamed stockings. You know they make me crazy. You did it on purpose.

SECRETARY
I did not.

She clutches the handrail so she won't fall while he plays with her leg.

BRUCE
Oh sure, there's like, some really logical, practical reason why you wear them. So what is it, are they cheaper than regular stockings?

SECRETARY
No.

BRUCE
Are they more comfortable?

SECRETARY
No.

BRUCE
Are they healthier? Better for the environment? More politically correct in some way?

SECRETARY
No.

BRUCE
So you admit it's just to torture me.

He lets go of her leg and tries to hold her.

SECRETARY
Come on, Bruce, I gotta get this to Gold and I got a ton of work to get back to.

BRUCE
I'll take it to him, I'm on my way there.

Bruce takes away her memo.

SECRETARY
Hey, you think there'll be any personnel changes?

BRUCE
Ah, you got nothing to worry about, a girl of your obvious assets.

She hits him and giggles. He moves her to the door.

BRUCE
We better leave separately or you're gonna get me into all sorts of trouble.

She leaves and he listens to her walking away, then sits down and starts to read the memo.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Rick splashes water in his face, dries it and examines himself in the mirror. He sees how he'd look without his glasses versus with his glasses. He decides to wear them and leaves.

INT. MAZE OF EXTERIOR OFFICES - DAY

From overhead we see Rick walking through the cubicles.

CUT TO:

INT. MAZE - DAY

From overhead we see a RAT wandering through a maze trying to get to a piece of cheese in the center.

INT. MAZE OF OFFICES - DAY

Rick gets by the Secretary and goes into...

INT. BOSSES' OFFICE - DAY

Rick enters. Behind an imposing desk sits a large PIECE of SWISS CHEESE.

CHEESE (MIKE)
Sit down, Rick.

RICK
How's it going, Mike?

(In coverage the Boss is seen as a regular man).

MIKE
Fine.

RICK
How's Pat and the kids?

MIKE
What's this big concept of yours?

RICK
(not quite ready)
O.K., you know the average customer is becoming much more sophisticated about the product...

MIKE
I can't say I agree, but go on.

RICK
Well, I think we should play up the fact that we offer both U.V.A. and U.V.B. protection. People have a much better idea about...

MIKE
(cutting him off)
Is that basically it?

RICK
(pulls cardboard illustrations)
I had the boys draw up a couple of possible concepts.

MIKE
Is this what you see as our big summer push?

RICK
Well, I don't know if it's the summer push, but it's a concept that I think is worth developing.

MIKE
Alright, just leave them, I'll look at 'em later.

Rick puts them down, he doesn't know if the meeting is over or not yet. He gets up, tentatively. Since no one stops him, he heads for the door. Before he leaves he is suddenly filled with resolve.

RICK
Mike, I really feel that this is an important issue. Could you tell me if I'm at least in the right ballpark?

MIKE
Well, to be brutally honest... no... you're not in the ballpark. In fact, you didn't even get off the right freeway exit.

Rick doesn't know what to say.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rick is cutting up food for his four-year-old girl, MOLLIE, as his wife, DEBBIE, loads the dishwasher.

RICK
You know what I should've said? I should have said, "Hey, maybe this exit has a shortcut."

DEBBIE
Why would you want to say that?

RICK
To let him know I'm serious about this. To show I'm willing to stand up to him.

DEBBIE
But what if you antagonized him? This isn't the best economic climate for starting all over.

RICK
I know, this is no time to be "out there."

MOLLIE
I got it, I'll call up Mike and tell him if he isn't nicer to you than I won't marry his little boy.

DEBBIE
That ought to scare him.

Debbie slams the dishwasher shut.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rick and Debbie are in bed.

RICK
He didn't even let me get past the technical end. I had this whole campaign built up on the dualism of the product, like the Cert's "Two mints in one" ads. It was really humorous.

Debbie starts snoring. Rick realizes she's been sleeping the whole time. Mollie starts crying from her room.

Rick gets up and goes into...

INT. MOLLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rick runs in. Mollie's yelling in her sleep.

MOLLIE
Chucky the Killer doll!

RICK
Mollie, Mollie honey, you're having a bad dream.

She wakes up and holds him.

RICK
It's O.K. It's O.K.

MOLLIE
Will you stay?

RICK
Sure. Shove over.

He snuggles up in the kid-size bed with her.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (HALLWAY)

Immaculately clean and organized. Bruce enters and puts down his dry cleaning. We go with him through the apartment.

BRUCE
Hello, boys, I'm home... so guess what?

He goes into...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BRUCE
(getting a beer)
We've got a meeting to go to. A meeting with a Mr. Michael Minky. Isn't that exciting?

He continues into...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRUCE
We get to meet the new boss, who, by the way, already has his own team. Is this a jerk-off or what?... So... who wants to go to this meeting?

WE CUT TO what he was talking to and see it's his shirts in the closet. He answers himself in a "shirt voice."

BRUCE
(as a shirt)
I want to go, pick me!

He takes out a shirt and holds it up.

BRUCE
Sure, you like to go out. And you're very expensive, but as I recall you're an unlucky shirt. Wasn't I wearing you on the day of the packaging fiasco?

He goes to the window.

BRUCE
In fact, you better not be with the other shirts. I'll air you out 'til you lose your bad luck.

He hangs the shirt outside and returns to the closet.

BRUCE
(shirts)
Take me, I'm an Armani, forget him, I make you look good. No take me, I'm silk.

He picks a shirt, holds it up, decides it looks good, then addresses it.

BRUCE
O.K., you can come, but you better be lucky.

He shuts the closet.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

From the outer area of secretaries and workers, we see Rick's glass private office. He has vertical blinds that give it a cagey look. Rick is going through things with his secretary, MARIANNE.

RICK
Did we hear from Todd about the counter space?

MARIANNE
He's coming in Tuesday. You got a letter from Mike in your E-mail.

Rick punches up a message on his computer.

RICK
I don't know why he can't just call instead of goofing around with this electronic mail.

MARIANNE
Anything to be less personal.

Rick gets a message to go to Mike's office.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick enters.

MIKE
Rick, come in, I want you to meet someone.

Bruce gets up and extends his hand. Rick looks at Bruce. Bruce looks Rick up and down.

MIKE
Bruce has the same duties at Youthquake that you do with us.

They shake hands and make an effort to smile. We hear the BUZZING sound of the electrical shock.

BRUCE
Rick.

RICK
Bruce.

Behind Rick we see an open door.

MIKE
As you know, Johnson's and Youthquake will be joining forces pretty soon, so we thought it would be a good idea for you boys to start working alongside each other. Learn each other's methods. Get an exchange of ideas going.

Rick tries to smile.

MIKE
Then when the merger becomes fact everything will be in place in the Sunblock Department.

As Mike talks we see...

QUICK CUT

A HUMAN-SIZED RAT wearing Rick's suit. We hear a BUZZING sound. He stands still. OTHER RATS dressed in office clothes run out the door behind him as he shakes and his fur starts to stand on end.

MIKE
Well, I'm sure you boys have a lot to discuss. Rick, maybe you can start by showing Bruce around.

QUICK CUT

A HUMAN-SIZE RAT dressed like Bruce. He is fighting with the Rick Rat and winning.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - THE HUMAN BRUCE smiling easily; relieved he has someone to fight with.

BRUCE
Great idea, Mike.

He gives Rick a smiling, yet scary, look.

CUT TO:

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

Rick and Bruce are walking by. They are both wearing dark blue suits. Bruce's is trendier.

RICK
Research and Development, mixing, capping, and packing are here, the Administrative Offices and Customer Service are in the Valley Office.

BRUCE
Mmmm hmmmm.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPPING DEPARTMENT - DAY

Machinery is banging away.

RICK
We have two L.D.-4's capping five hundred units an hour.

BRUCE
Why didn't you wait a couple months for the L.D.-5's? They can do twice that amount.

RICK
These serve us well, and who knew the Five's would be out so soon.

BRUCE
I'll bet you have a Betamax and still play eight-track tapes.

He laughs. Rick doesn't.

BRUCE
Really, don't you have any contacts at Harcourt?

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rick's head is in the toilet. He is throwing up.

Dr. Shawn is sitting on the bathtub. He addresses us.

DOCTOR SHAWN
Gastric problems are no surprise.
(MORE)

DOCTOR SHAWN (cont'd)
Internalizing shock is probably responsible for all of our so-called "civilized" diseases, ulcers, migraines, heart disease, immunity dysfunctions.

Rick throws up some more, Dr. Shawn reacts.

DEBBIE O.S.
Are you O.K.?

RICK
Yeah.

He takes a swig of mouthwash and leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mollie stares at him.

MOLLIE
Is Daddy going to die?

DEBBIE
Not yet, honey.

He leads her to her room.

RICK
Back to bed.

He comes back and gets into bed.

DEBBIE
Maybe it was something you ate.

RICK
It's nothing I ate. It's this asshole Bruce. I've been with Johnson's nine years, I have almost a hundred people working under me. Now suddenly I have to compete for my own job.

DEBBIE
Did Mike say that?

RICK
No, but with all the reorganizing and cutting back, I'm sure they don't plan to keep both of us.

DEBBIE
God. You work so hard. No one ever appreciates it.

RICK
They don't care about my department. They're busy with their medical supplies and sanitary napkins. Sunblock is just an afterthought for them... Besides, maybe I haven't been doing such a great job.

DEBBIE
What do you mean?

RICK
For one thing, we're not as modernized as we should be. And our ads. I've really wanted to change our agency. This guy's real trendy. He's better with the bullshit, dealing with people, I'm no good at that. I don't know what I'm doing.

CUT TO:

FILM CLIP - "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE." Jimmy Stewart (George Baily) is on a bridge, at the end of his rope, he asks God for guidance.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

The Jimmy Stewart movie is playing on a TV. Lisa walks in front of it.

LISA
Can I change this, my Quantum Leap is on at ten.

SALLY (THE BOSS)
Yeah, O.K.

Lisa takes the video out and goes behind the counter where she works with a BITTER GUY.

LISA
I play a junkie who's turned to prostitution to support my habit while Sam, the guy who does the quantum leaping, is preventing a future rock star from taking drugs.

BITTER GUY
Sounds like an interesting stretch for you.

A WOMAN comes to the counter.

WOMAN
Is "Problem Child II" any good?

BITTER GUY
Do you have children?

WOMAN
Yes.

BITTER GUY
Are they exceptionally stupid?

Lisa gives him a look. The woman takes out the video.

WOMAN
O.K., forget this one.

LISA
Say, are you looking for a children's video?

WOMAN
I want to keep them busy so I can watch mine.

Lisa leads her to a shelf.

LISA
We've got a whole new batch for sale, only nine-ninety-nine.

The WOMAN looks interested and picks some. Sally comes over to Lisa.

SALLY
Hey, I noticed how you won that woman back after Billy talked his way out of a job... good work.

Lisa is surprised she was watched.

LISA
Thanks... Omygod! It's ten!
Quantum Leap!

She rushes to get in front of the TV and is joined by Sally, the Bitter Guy and the Woman.

CUT TO:

ON THE TV - Sam (Scott Bakula) is driving a car.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE

LISA
It's after this. Outside the club. I'm strung out and I proposition Scott Bakula.

WOMAN
Louie, come here, she's going to be on Quantum Leap.

LISA
(proudly)
I'm a hooker.

CUT TO:

ON THE TV - Sam stops the car, then we see the next scene, he enters an interior (there is no "outside the club").

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE

Lisa stares at the set, realizing she was cut, a wave of disappointment overwhelms her.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT presses a bar for food. None comes out.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE

The others look at Lisa.

SALLY
Are you sure it was here? Maybe it was later.

LISA
No, they were probably running long. That's pretty common for TV.

She notices the others looking at her and immediately perks up.

LISA
Oh, I gotta tell you, the director had this, like, nubby three-day growth, so I asked Scott Bakula how he liked him and Scott goes, "The guy can't even direct a beard out of his face."

The others listen to her stories instead of the TV. Lisa is happy to have an audience.

LISA
And Jason Bateman was the guest star and Tom, the sound guy, left his microphone on...

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S CAR - DAY

Lisa looks miserable, holding back tears and sniffing. She picks a tissue box off the floor, it's empty. She tries to look in her bag while driving.

CUT TO:

EXT. CURVY ROAD - DAY

Lisa drives her beat-up Volvo. Bruce's Porsche comes weaving over.

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY

Bruce is talking on his car phone.

BRUCE
What?.. What?... Hold on, I'm losing you...

He bangs the receiver on the steering wheel. We see the Porsche swaying out of the lane.

BRUCE
Hello... shit... hello, look I'm gonna' have to pull over a second.

There is no one in his rearview mirror but he doesn't check his "blind spot." We see Lisa's car alongside his rear end. The Porsche quickly pulls into the lane and they SMASH into each other.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLVO - DAY

Lisa screams as she is run off the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The cars roll to a halt. Lisa stumbles out of her car.

LISA
Are you O.k.?

Bruce hops out screaming.

BRUCE
YOU IDIOT! LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO MY CAR! WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME IN? WHATSAMATTER, YOU IN A HURRY TO GET TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE!?

Lisa is appalled.

LISA
Why didn't you use your turn signal? Didn't they teach you that in Asshole School?

Bruce is looking over his car.

BRUCE
Hey, what causes you more problems, your blindness or your stupidity?

LISA
What planet are you from? This is all your fault.

BRUCE
Gimme your driver's license and insurance company.

They exchange information and start writing.

BRUCE
You think you can do whatever the hell you want just 'cause you're pretty.

While Lisa is writing we hear the bell RINGING that signals a reward (when she's called "pretty"). She sneaks an examining glance at Bruce. Bruce looks at her but when she catches him doing it he gives her a condescending look.

A tow truck arrives and Dr. Shawn gets out. He hooks up the car as he speaks.

DOCTOR SHAWN
Eventually a pattern develops. For instance, Lisa averages about fifty auditions for every one job. This is called a "Variable Reward Schedule." How can Bruce fit into her neurotic lifestyle? Let's see...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

BRUCE C.U.
You idiot!

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat pushes a lever - gets nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

BRUCE C.U.
You in a hurry to get to the unemployment agency?

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat pushes a lever - again nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

BRUCE C.U.
What causes you more problems?
Your blindness or your
stupidity?

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat pushes a lever - more nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

BRUCE C.U.
Just 'cause you're pretty.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

The rat presses a lever. Many food pellets drop out.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Lisa looks at Bruce.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Definitely worth considering.

CUT TO:

INT. MALL - DAY

Lisa and Sally are strolling.

LISA
If someone called you 'beautiful' do you think that means they like you?

SALLY
It depends. If you're a real knockout then it's just an observation, but if you're a pig then they probably like you.

Lisa considers this, wondering where she stands.

LISA
What if you've got a certain style and you look really good for your age...

SALLY
...And you smash into his car and obsess about him for a week.

LISA
Oh, have we discussed this already?

SALLY
Only ad nauseum, but we might have missed something.

LISA
Oooh, let's go in here, they give free cappuccinos.

SALLY
You're kidding.

They enter a store.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Sally and Lisa are sitting at a cappuccino bar.

LISA
On the phone he was really nice, but I think his lawyer told him I could sue him, so I don't count that. What I'm thinking more about is when he was angry at me and then he gave me that look.

Sally yawns.

LISA
Except I'm not sure I read it right. But it looked like the way guys look at you when they like you. Only I'm not sure if it really happened or if I'm imagining it. What do you think I should do?

SALLY
I don't know, either Prozac or Lithium.

Lisa notices something.

LISA
Omigod, cranberry leggings, just what I've been looking for.

They go over to the clothes...

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP REGISTER - Clothes are being rung up.

SALLY
You and your big ideas. A hundred and forty dollars for a "free" cappuccino.

LISA
I know, I always come in for free caps and wind up buying stuff.

Sally gives the girl her credit card. Lisa gets inspired.

LISA
Sally, you gotta do this! You got to get a cappuccino machine at Hit Video.

SALLY
You know how expensive those things are?

LISA
Maybe you could lease it or something. People come in and then they buy. Look what just happened with us.

SALLY
That might not be a bad idea. But why not charge for them?

LISA
Because you need a different kind of license. It wouldn't be worth it. I was talking to the manager in there about it.

They get their packages and leave.

SALLY
You know, you actually have quite a head on your shoulders when you put it to use.

LISA
Yeah, but getting back to Bruce...

SALLY
Uhhh...

CUT TO:

INT. LE DOME - DAY

Lisa is sitting alone with a drink. She sneaks a look at her watch. A WAITER approaches.

WAITER
Would you care to order?

LISA
No, I'm waiting for someone.

He leaves. She takes a roll, cuts it up, changes her mind and puts it back. Bruce finally arrives.

BRUCE
You just get here?

LISA
If I did I'd be pretty rude. You said eight o'clock.

BRUCE
I'm sorry, it couldn't be helped. Would you like a drink?

LISA
I got one.

He calls the Waiter over and orders a drink. Someone he knows, MARTY, is at another table. Marty waves to him.

BRUCE
Marty!
(to Lisa)
Excuse me a second.

He gets up and goes to Marty's table. Lisa looks disappointed.

CUT TO:

A BUSBOY comes by and picks up the empty bread basket and leaves a new one. Bruce returns with a rosebud wrapped in plastic.

LISA
What's that?

BRUCE
I don't know, looks like some sort of vegetation.

Lisa takes out some papers.

LISA
Look, here's the estimates for the bodywork and the paint. I'm going to rent a car in the meantime. If I'm not reimbursed immediately your lawyer will hear from my lawyer.

She gets up and leaves. He follows her out.

BRUCE
Shit, Lisa, wait...

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - NIGHT

He catches up to her and grabs her arm.

BRUCE
Hey, what's the big idea?

LISA
Where do you come off keeping me waiting twenty minutes and then running off to schmooze for another fifteen.

BRUCE
I had to talk to Marty. it couldn't be helped.

She takes out her parking stub.

LISA
And you give me a lousy rose, like my time is worth two bucks an hour and I should be grateful.

She starts to hand the stub to the Valet but Bruce grabs one end. (She still holds it also).

LISA
You think you're pretty cute, don't you?

BRUCE
(acting insulted)
Don't you?

Bruce looks at her seductively.

LISA
Can I have my ticket please?

The confused Valet makes attempts at taking it.

BRUCE
No.

LISA
Is there no end to your rudeness?

He waves away the Valet.

BRUCE
Listen, I really am very sorry. Let's just go back and have dinner.

She tries to forcefully pull the ticket away but he's stronger and yanks her close to him. He looks in her eyes and talks forcefully.

BRUCE
Lisa, I said I was sorry.

LISA
(staring back)
And I said, "give it to me."

He grabs her and kisses her.

BRUCE AND LISA MONTAGE

Over Joan Jett's "I HATE MYSELF FOR LOVING YOU," we see...

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce and Lisa fall into bed kissing...

INT. BRUCE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Lisa struggles to get an omelet on the plate without ruining it. A perfect breakfast is laid out. Bruce dashes through and just grabs some toast.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is singing and dancing in front of the TV. Bruce waves her away and throws a cushion at her.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lisa is sick in bed. Bruce takes her temperature, feels her forehead and feeds her soup.

INT. CAR - DAY

Bruce yells at Lisa for not reading the road map correctly.

EXT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

Lisa takes in his shirts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lisa supervises a juke box repairman.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lisa models sexy underwear.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lisa opens the door. Bruce is holding a ton of flowers.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lisa and Bruce are making love passionately.

INT. LAB - DAY

A bunch of food pellets spurt out.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce gets a cigarette and embraces Lisa. He smothers her with kisses and puts the pack down. We see the Surgeon General's warning: "Cigarettes cause cancer in laboratory animals."

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

A glass wall separates Bruce and Rick's offices from the outer office. They both have vertical blinds, giving it the look of adjacent cages. Bruce goes to Marianne in the outer office.

BRUCE
Jesus, does Rick ever leave the office?

MARIANNE
Would you?

Bruce offers her some gum.

BRUCE
Want?

As she unwraps a piece Bruce picks up a date book.

BRUCE
Who've I got this afternoon? Todd? Who's he?

Marianne takes back the book.

MARIANNE
That's Rick's, here's yours.

BRUCE
Oh, sorry.

Marianne puts on lipstick.

BRUCE
I bet this Todd's kind of cute, I've never seen you with lipstick on.

MARIANNE
Get out of here. He's just a distribution guy. He's kind of nerdy, actually.

Bruce walks away.

BRUCE
Be right back.

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Bruce wanders around, scoping out the place. He spots a computer and punches in a message.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK & BRUCE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Marianne gets a message on the computer. She calls Rick.

MARIANNE
You got electronic mail from capping. There's an emergency with one of the machines.

RICK V.O.
Tell them I'll be right there.

Rick walks through.

RICK
When Todd gets here tell him I'll be right back.

Rick leaves. Bruce comes back.

BRUCE
Marianne, why don't you go to lunch.

MARIANNE
I don't want to.

BRUCE
(annoyed)
Why not?

MARIANNE
Because.

He grumbles and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR BANK - DAY

Bruce is hanging out. A MAN gets off the elevator.

BRUCE
Todd?

MAN
I beg your pardon?

BRUCE
Are you Todd?

MAN
No.

He leaves as an awkward YOUNG MAN ENTERS.

BRUCE
Todd?

TODD
Huh?

BRUCE
Are you Todd?

TODD
Yeah.

BRUCE
(shaking his hand)
I've been looking forward to meeting you, I'm Bruce Fleming.

TODD
Oh, you're the new guy from Youthquake.

BRUCE
Yeah. Listen, Rick had to leave, but if you've got some time there's a few things I'd love to get up to speed on.

TODD
Sure, if Rick doesn't need me.

BRUCE
Nah, he's gonna be held up awhile. Why don't we duck in here for a few minutes.

He leads Todd into a conference room.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Rick hurries back to his office.

RICK
That was weird. No one seems to know where that message came from. Is Todd here yet?

MARIANNE
I haven't seen him.

Rick goes into his office.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Bruce and Todd are eating food left over from an earlier conference.

TODD
...Rick really wants up front counter space but I'm not having any luck. Thrifty, Sav-On, all of 'em. They're all doing well with them horoscope things. The product's too big, and besides, sunblock's not really an impulse buy.

BRUCE
Anything's an impulse buy if it's up front... Don't we have sample sizes?

TODD
Sure, for dermatologists.

BRUCE
Why not make a sample display and see if it flies?

Todd looks like it might be worth a try.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick is on the phone to Marianne.

RICK
You want to call Todd and see if he was held up or something.

MARIANNE V.O.
O.K., and Mike is on two-eight.

He gets on that line.

RICK
Mike?

MIKE V.O.
Rick, I've got Bruce and Todd up here...

Rick looks stunned. We hear the BUZZING sound that accompanies the rat's being SHOCKED.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

CLOSE UP - RAT. His hair stands up on end. His breathing is very rapid. He holds a phone up to his ear.

MIKE V.O.
They've worked up a really good concept for counter space.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick starts to worry that the whole fake message deal was Bruce's doing and that the guy is really evil.

MIKE V.O.
Why don't you come up here. You should be in on this, too.

Rick's breathing becomes strained, his hair and suit get matted looking, the room seems to close in on him.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rick pops up in bed, out of breath. Debbie wakes up.

DEBBIE
What's wrong?

RICK
I dreamt I was walking down Wilshire Boulevard and I turned a corner and I was back in the Bronx and I kept trying to turn a corner and get out but no matter where I went I couldn't get out of the Bronx.

DEBBIE
Well relax, you're in Brentwood.

She takes a Kleenex and wipes the sweat off his face. He snuggles up to her and puts an arm around her.

DEBBIE
Hon, I can't breathe, I can't have any weight on my stomach.

They shuffle around and try to sleep like spoons.

DEBBIE
No, wait, my back let me get comfortable.

Rick watches her build a fortress of pillows between them.

DEBBIE
I'm really tired.

Rick takes a deep breath and tries to go to sleep.

Dr. Shawn is sitting at a vanity table.

DOCTOR SHAWN
Sure. She's tired, he's under stress, she's got a headache. How many couples stay together when there's absolutely nothing left?

CUT TO:

RICK AND DEBBIE IN BED

Rick looks worried.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Fear of AIDS, fear of loneliness, fear of meeting a crazy person, like the woman in "Fatal Attraction." All excellent reasons to stay put...but are those the real reasons?

CUT TO:

A MAN-SIZED RAT IN PAJAMAS

is in bed with Debbie. He is being shocked.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Or is it the underlying belief that one is incapable of even having a good relationship. Why try, why move on, why not settle for a dinner companion and person to complain to?

CUT TO:

RICK AND DEBBIE ARE IN BED

RICK
I'll bet anything Bruce sent that E-mail. You turn your back on him for a second and he's up to something. Even Marianne said she doesn't trust him. She said he looks like a serial killer.

DEBBIE
But I thought you're supposed to be partners.

Rick laughs sarcastically.

RICK
Partners! We're supposed to rip each other apart till one of us bleeds to death. Somehow that's 'good business.'

DEBBIE
Why don't we have him over for dinner?

RICK
Did you just wake up? this guy wants to steal my job.

DEBBIE
You know what they say, "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer."

RICK
What's that from? The Bible?

DEBBIE
No, "The Godfather." Come on, you can make your special duck.

RICK
Right. He wants to destroy me so I should spend all day cooking for him.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Rick carries in a platter of duck to Bruce, Lisa and Debbie. Bruce has his arm around Lisa.

LISA
Oh, that looks wonderful.

BRUCE
What is that? Pork?

RICK
It's pressed duck.

Rick starts to serve. Bruce holds up his hand.

BRUCE
That's plenty.

Lisa tastes the duck.

LISA
This is incredible. How did you make it?

DEBBIE
Don't ask. He started yesterday.

RICK
Well, if you don't want duck to be fatty...

BRUCE
That's one thing I could never understand. You spend so much time looking through recipes, buying ingredients and cooking and then the next day it just gets flushed down the toilet.

Rick stops in mid-bite. Lisa gives Rick a look to show she doesn't agree with Bruce. Rick smiles at her.

BRUCE
Mind if I smoke?

Rick looks like he does but he doesn't say anything.

DEBBIE
I don't mind, but it bothers Rick.

RICK
It "bothers" everyone with lungs.

The phone RINGS.

DEBBIE
I'll get it.

She leaves. Bruce plays with his cigarette.

RICK
Lisa, what do you do for a living?

LISA
I'm an actress.

RICK
(excited)
Really? Anything I could've seen you in lately?

LISA
You ever watch 'Full House?'

Debbie comes back.

RICK
Of course, Mollie loves it.

LISA
I was the teacher.

DEBBIE
I don't remember a teacher on "Full House".

BRUCE
It was just one episode. So what's Mike's trip?

RICK
What do you mean?

BRUCE
Sometimes he seems like a regular guy, like you can goof with him, and other times he's such a stiff... you think he ever did drugs?

Bruce continues trying to get information on Mike which Rick doesn't want to give him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CLOSE UP - DUCK AND VEGETABLES

being scraped into garbage. The lid slams shut.

RICK
You hardly ate anything.

Rick is cleaning up and Lisa is helping herself to coffee.

LISA
Oh no, I'm stuffed. You're an amazing cook. Your wife's lucky. Bruce thinks it's not masculine to know where the kitchen is so I make dinner every night.

RICK
I'll bet you're a great cook.

LISA
Oh no, I stink, but I can't let that stop me.

RICK
You know, I didn't catch your "Full House," but I know I've seen you on TV before.

LISA
Maybe on one of my commercials. Toyota, Weight Watchers, Pudding Pops...

RICK
That's it! The diet Pudding Pop's.

LISA
Oh, god.

RICK
You were really good in it. In fact, you want to know something embarrassing?

LISA
I don't know.

RICK
I went out and bought Pudding Pops 'cause you made them look so good. You're a very convincing actress.

LISA
Thanks. How'd you like the Pudding Pops?

RICK
They were pretty lousy.

LISA
I know. I threw up that night.

RICK
You did?

LISA
Sure. After ten hours of sucking those things, think about it.

RICK
I am.

They laugh. She hits him.

LISA
God...

RICK
I mean, I didn't mean... Do you take cream or milk?

LISA
Huh? Oh no, this is for Bruce.

She goes into...

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce is smoking up the place as he makes an effort to talk to Debbie. Lisa gives him the coffee. He tries it and hands it back to her.

BRUCE
Hon, this is cold.

LISA
I'll go nuke it for you.

She takes the coffee and leaves.

INT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

DEBBIE
Thanks for coming.

RICK
Goodnight.

BRUCE
See you tomorrow.

LISA
It was so sweet of you to have us over. You have to let us take you to dinner soon.

RICK
I'll be watching for your Toyota spot.

DEBBIE
Thanks for the flowers.

BRUCE
Bye.

Bruce and Lisa leave. Rick shuts the door, he looks at Debbie.

DEBBIE
I see what you mean.

She goes into the dining room, he follows.

RICK
Now you get it?

She clears off the dessert stuff.

DEBBIE
He's hip and he's pushy. You're never going to beat him. If they can only keep one of you, we're screwed.

She leaves.

RICK
Well thanks, thanks for your confidence and support.

DEBBIE
He'll be dumping her soon enough. Actress...
(she laughs snidely)
...she's an actress like I'm a model.

RICK
No. I've seen her on commercials, she's got a likeable face.

Debbie gives him a look.

RICK
For commercials.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is in her underwear putting on moisturizer. Bruce comes by.

BRUCE
Oh, my god! Look at this butt!

He bites it. She screams. He leaves.

BRUCE V.O.
Did you believe Rick's wife, what a cow.

LISA
They don't seem very happy.

BRUCE V.O.
Why do people like that stay together?

LISA
It's not so easy to break up when you've got a family.

Bruce comes back in, fighting with his shirt.

SHIRT (BRUCE)
NO! NO! I'm not going.
(as Bruce)
Oh yes you are.
(shirt)
NO! Please stop!

Bruce opens the hamper and tries to put the shirt in.

BRUCE
Get in there.
(shirt)
No, I'm not ready.
(Bruce)
Oh yes you are, you STINK!

The shirt starts to strangle him. Lisa watches, not surprised. After a struggle the shirt is finally in the hamper. Bruce catches his breath.

BRUCE
There. And I don't want any trouble out of you tonight. Get in there.

He pushes her into the bedroom.

LISA
(flatly)
Oh, you're so forceful.

He shuts the light.

CUT TO:

COMPETING FOR BOSSES' AFFECTION MONTAGE

"UNDER PRESSURE" by Queen plays as we see...

Rick's car pulls into the parking lot. It is very early and there are no other cars, until he spots Bruce's Porsche. Rick gets out, looks concerned and hurries into work.

Bruce has a few of his underlings in his office. They are all piling through sales reports.

Rick is in the factory going through reports with the Foreman. Bruce walks to Mike's office, peeks in and sees Rick and Mike laughing.

He walks away angry, slamming his report against the wall.

Rick and Todd are in a drugstore chain, going through shelf displays with the manager.

Bruce gives Mike a present (something weird that Mike collects, like old lunch boxes). Mike is delighted.

Through the glass wall with blinds, Rick sees into Bruce's office. Many people are working, talking, etc. as Bruce paces. Rick reacts wondering what they're all up to.

Bruce is in a clothing store with Mike, helping him pick out suits. Rick walks to the door of a big house. Mike lets him in. Rick gives him some papers as they walk through to Mike's home office. When they get there Rick sees Bruce working on Mike's computer, seeming very casual and at ease.

From outside at night, we see the Johnson's Building. All the windows are unlit or dimly lit, with empty offices. Then we move up to Rick and Bruce's offices, brightly lit with the two men still inside, working.

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Lisa is behind the counter wearing a costume with six arms. Sally, now slightly pregnant, is surprised.

SALLY
What the hell is that?

LISA
I have to get used to my costume. I got the lead in "Charlotte's Web."
(holds out arms)
What do you think?

SALLY
I think it's time for a new agent.

LISA
My agents didn't get this. There's no money in childrens' theatre, but it's fun.

A MAN comes in and returns a video. Lisa adds up his bill.

LISA
Sixteen dollars.

MAN
What?!

LISA
Sixteen dollars.

MAN
For "The Tall Man With One Red Shoe?"

LISA
For any movie out a week and not rewound.

MAN
But it's "The Tall Man With One Red Shoe." They should've paid me to watch it.

LISA
I'm not the producer, I don't get a share of the profits.

The Man pays reluctantly.

MAN
Man, that's it, remind me never to rent another tape.

He leaves and slams the door.

SALLY
Yeah, break the door while you're at it.

LISA
Everyone's always mad at me 'cause they rent lousy movies.

SALLY
Well, what can you do?

LISA
You know what I would do? I'd have "two-for-one" deals with the classics, no one ever rents them but if they did, they'd love 'em. And I'd have a return delivery service for an extra fee, themes and promos, like "employees pic" or "dog of the week." Also, I'd change these green florescents to pink, you look sick in this light.

SALLY
I am sick. But I like your ideas, I think you should tell them to Mr. Ingram when he's in town next month.

LISA
Mr. Ingram? But you're the manager. Don't you think maybe you could tell him?...

SALLY
They're good ideas, don't worry, he's gonna love you.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lisa is cleaning up while Bruce unwraps a brand new phone.

LISA
You know what happened at work today?

BRUCE
(mocking)
I don't want to talk about work, I want to talk about us.

She throws a towel at him.

LISA
Why doesn't someone put you out of your misery?

Bruce pulls her over and shows off the phone.

BRUCE
Lookit this, you can store up to twenty phone numbers.

LISA
Now you just need twenty people who want to talk to you.

BRUCE
I love this phone.

LISA
Aren't you afraid your shirts will be jealous?

He holds her.

BRUCE
That's what I like about you, you're like a human being.

LISA
I'm like a human being?

BRUCE
You're very similar. Now go in the other room, call this phone and say something good so it'll have luck!

She leaves the room singing "PEOPLE ARE STRANGE" by the Doors. The phone RINGS.

BRUCE
Hello.

LISA V.O.
Hello, is Bruce there?

BRUCE
Yes.

LISA V.O.
I hope you and this phone will have many lucky, lucky conversations.

BRUCE
Why, thank you.

LISA V.O.
You know what happened at work today?

BRUCE
No, what?...

CUT TO:

EXT. RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Rick and Mollie are assembling a hammock as Debbie looks on.

RICK
You know what happened at work today?

DEBBIE
Thrill me.

RICK
I was working on my children's sunblock idea and Lenny in research said Bruce has absolutely no knowledge of the formula, or chemistry, or the physics of radiation.

DEBBIE
So? That won't stop him.

RICK
How's he going to come up with a summer idea if he has no understanding of the product.

DEBBIE
I don't think your expertise on radiation is going to scare Bruce at all. He'll come up with something.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mike is at the head of the table with Bruce, Rick, Todd and an assortment of the Sunblock executives.

MIKE
Bruce has brought it to my attention that we have an image problem with our sunblock...

Rick can't believe it.

MIKE
So we've asked Wayne of Image, Inc. to come and give us some advice on our sunblock identity.

WAYNE
I think maybe the proper term would be "identity crisis". I've gone over your TV spots, your print ads and most importantly, your packaging and I'm afraid what we have is a product in search of an image.

RICK
That's ridiculous. The product is sunblock and it's called "Bloc Out."
(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)
There's even a picture of the sun and the name Johnson's, which happens to be the oldest and must trusted name in home medical supplies.

WAYNE
The name Johnson's is no reason to buy "Bloc Out." You don't date a woman because she comes from a good family.

MIKE
What do you suggest, Wayne?

WAYNE
First you have to decide who you are. You have to tell me...
(puts down "Bloc Out")
...what this stuff means to you.

MIKE
Rick...

Rick feels like an atheist forced into some religious group.

RICK
It's sunblock! It blocks out the sun.

WAYNE
Why?

RICK
To protect the skin.

WAYNE
Against what?

RICK
Against the sun, against cancer.

WAYNE
Is that what you really want to say?

RICK
(impassioned)
What's going on here? Since 1975 skin cancer in 20-year olds has gone up ninety percent, the hole in the ozone grows a mile a day, and the temperature has been steadily rising.
(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)
How can we wonder what good this stuff is when we look at those facts?

BRUCE
I'll tell you what happens when I look at those facts. I get depressed. I don't want to go outside, in which case, I don't need sunblock.

WAYNE
How do you see the product?

Bruce looks thoughtful. He gets up and walks around as he speaks.

BRUCE
It's not so much how I see the product, it's how I see myself. I'm getting older, but I still think of myself as young. I want to go out, go boating, go swimming, go hiking, but I don't want to get all wrinkled and leathery. I want this --
(holding "Bloc Out")
to keep me young. I want it to be Anti-Aging.

Rick looks angry. Wayne looks impressed.

MIKE
Interesting...

RICK
But it's protection, not "anti-aging." That would be like calling a coat "anti pneumonia."

BRUCE
"Protection" sounds uptight, "anti-aging" sounds sexy. But maybe you don't think sex is important...

Rick glares at him, then turns to Mike.

RICK
Mike, your grandfather built the company on the idea of hospital quality products at home. "Bloc Out" is more important now than ever. Let's not make it into some fluffy fantasy.

BRUCE
If it's the fantasy that makes people use it, they're still better off than if they never buy it.

Rick and Bruce both watch Mike for his reaction. He gives it some thought.

MIKE
I think I'm going to have to go along with Bruce on this one.

WAYNE
Great. Anti-aging it is. I'd even like to see that incorporated into the name...

As Wayne continues to talk his voice gets more and more metallic until it is a BUZZING sound. Rick sits, looking upset as Bruce and Wayne talk and gesture excitedly.

INT. VIDEO STORE - DAY

Lisa is in a suit. She looks like an actress dressed up as a businesswoman. She turns to another clerk.

LISA
Do I look like an executive?

The clerk bursts out laughing. Lisa looks discouraged. The phone RINGS.

LISA
Hit Video.

VOICE OVER
Lisa, you got a callback at three-thirty.

LISA
A callback? I haven't even been out for a month.

VOICE OVER
It's for Fisher Price. Four sixty La Cienega.

LISA
Could I possibly come later? I've got a meeting at work.

VOICE OVER
Oh sure, they'll reschedule their day for your convenience.

LISA
O.K., I'll be there.

They hang up.

LISA
Sally, can I take my lunch at three? I got a callback.

SALLY
Ingram will be here at four. I want him to meet you.

LISA
Oh, I know, but this is a callback, that means they must of liked me. Besides, he doesn't want to meet little clerks.

SALLY
Alright, if that's what you want.

LISA
Oh thanks, I'll stay later. Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - DAY

The Marlboro Man billboard has fallen down and crushed a car. Traffic is at a standstill. Horns HONKING.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLVO - DAY

Lisa is in her car, honking. She looks at her clock, it's two fifty-five.

LISA
Ah come on, those guys are dead already, I've got an audition.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA CIENEGA BLVD. - DAY

The Volvo screeches up and parks sloppily in front of a hydrant.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The place is crowded with kids and their parents. A CASTING WOMAN comes out and reads off some names.

LISA
I'm sorry. I'm Rinaldo. I was supposed to be three-thirty but Sunset was a disaster.

CASTING WOMAN
O.K. Where's your kid?

LISA
I don't have a kid. I was called back for the mother.

CASTING WOMAN
Mother's been cast.

LISA
But I was called back. If I could just read it once for you. It'd be less than a minute.

CASTING WOMAN
I'm sorry. We got two hundred kids to see and we have to be through with them by seven.

She stops a woman from entering the room.

CASTING WOMAN
No parents.

LISA
Could I just leave my picture?

The Casting Woman has gathered all her kids, she goes inside and shuts the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA CIENEGA - DAY

Lisa schleps out, looking totally beat, only to discover a parking ticket.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Bruce and Lisa walk down the aisles. Bruce has a list.

LISA
Do you think it's human nature to want to take shit?

BRUCE
It's not my nature.

LISA
Everytime I go up for a part they make me feel lousy. Everytime I suggest something in the video store they try it and they're so happy and they make me feel good... but I'd rather go out on auditions. Why is that?

BRUCE
You're obviously a very crazy person.

She starts to bypass an aisle.

BRUCE
Hey, where you going?

LISA
We need bread.

BRUCE
We didn't go down aisle nine yet.

LISA
We don't need dog food.

BRUCE
(insistent)
We have to go in order.

She follows him.

LISA
And you call me crazy.

They continue down the aisles.

CUT TO:

CASH REGISTER - They're putting groceries on turnstile.

LISA
What do you need all this beer and soda for?

BRUCE
In case the gang drops by.

LISA
What gang?

BRUCE
You know, people... guys.

LISA
In six months I've never seen any gang drop by.

He looks through her purse.

BRUCE
Where's my checkbook?

He takes his checks and starts to write one. Her license has gotten mixed in with his checks.

BRUCE
Hey, lookit this.

She tries to grab it back.

LISA
Gimme that.

BRUCE
(reading license)
Nineteen fifty-four! You're going to be thirty-eight! I thought you were younger than me.

She snatches it back from him.

LISA
So what.

BRUCE
I've never been with anyone that old.

LISA
Well, I've never been with anyone this immature.

They get their groceries and leave.

CUT TO:

A BLOW-UP OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, her face basking in the sun, with the giant legend "ANTI-AGING FORMULA". Rick walks by the poster. We are in...

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Rick walks drearily down the hallway. The walls are lined with "Anti-Aging" blow-ups.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHNSON'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rick walks through the empty lot. He passes Bruce and Mike at Bruce's Porsche. Mike is considering the pros and cons of getting one. Rick overhears a bit of their conversation.

BRUCE
...When we go on the company retreat my girlfriend will be driving down later. If you want to come with me you can give it a good test run...

RICK
(calling out)
Good night.

BRUCE AND MIKE
Good night.

Rick gets in his car and lowers his window so he can hear them finalizing their plans to go on the retreat together. He drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK & DEBBIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rick and Debbie getting ready for bed.

RICK
Bruce hustled Mike into driving up with him.

DEBBIE
So now they're big pals?

RICK
I guess.

DEBBIE
Forget it, you're never going to keep this job. Mike's blinded by the bullshit. Why do we have to go on this stupid retreat? Are you going to impress him with what a great sportsman you are?

RICK
How 'bout we just try to make an effort this time? Mike is into this team stuff. Can't you just play along a little?

DEBBIE
O.K.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN FIELD AT RETREAT - DAY

All the medical supply executives are in their leisure clothes. They have a race where three people stick their feet into one long pair of shoes and walk in sync. Most teams trip and fall. Everyone's cheering for their side, except Debbie, on the sidelines, looking disgusted and burying her head in a book. Bruce decides to take the lead of his group, yelling out, "Left! Right!" He keeps them together and they win.

BRUCE
We WON!
WE WON!
WE WON!

He jumps up and down like a maniac.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Assorted executives stumble around deciding where to sit. Mike has his arm around Lisa and they are singing "You Gotta Have Heart."

MIKE
Know what that's from?

RICK
Oklahoma?

LISA AND MIKE
No.

LISA
Damn Yankees, Ray Walston. You must of seen it.

RICK
Oh, right.

Lisa starts to walk to where Bruce is.

MIKE
Here, sit here.

Bruce and Lisa sit next to Mike. Rick and Debbie are further away. Debbie orders another drink and takes out her book.

DEBBIE
(to Rick)
Aren't you going to sing show tunes?

MIKE
There's a morning hike around the lake at seven-thirty.

People chime in with their interest in doing that. Debbie looks disgusted.

BRUCE
What time is the "Optimism" seminar?

MIKE
Twelve-thirty. We should be done by then.

DEBBIE
Maybe afterwards you can all go out and get "Johnson's" tattooed across your butts.

Rick looks sick. He forces a laugh.

RICK
Always joking.

He shoves her playfully (but actually not).

A WAITER interrupts.

WAITER
Is there a Debra Kamer here?

Rick looks worried.

DEBBIE
Yes?

WAITER
Phone call.

He starts to get up with her.

DEBBIE
It's O.K. Sit.

He sits. She leaves. Bruce gives Mike a look.

BRUCE
(quietly)
Meeoow.

He pantomimes whipping and mouths the word "pussywhipped." Rick can't figure who'd be calling Debbie.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATH BETWEEN BUNGALOWS - NIGHT

Rick and Debbie are walking back to their room.

RICK
You're really doing wonders for my career, Deb.

DEBBIE
What are you, suddenly getting ambitious on me?

RICK
If ambition is expecting my wife to be civil to my co-workers...

DEBBIE
(cuts him off)
Oh, give me a break with this team crap.
(MORE)

DEBBIE (cont'd)
We've spent two days with these pinheads, from the crack of dawn till eleven o'clock. I'm going out of my mind.

RICK
Maybe I should teach, like you, then I could complain about how stupid everyone is and how underpaid I am. People find that so endearing.

DEBBIE
It beats some of the activities around here, like the "Stick Your Head Up Mike's Asshole" competition and the seminar...

RICK
(cuts in)
Can you keep it down...

Lisa runs over to them and they immediately act friendly.

RICK AND DEBBIE
Hi!

LISA
Hi!

DEBBIE
Long time no see.

RICK
Hey, where's Bruce?

LISA
He wanted to go to bed so he'd be up early, but I get restless. No matter what time I get up, I can't go to bed early.

DEBBIE
Hmm...

LISA
Do you guys want to go into town, get some frozen yogurt or something?

RICK
Sure.

DEBBIE
Actually, I'm just going to take a bath.

RICK
(to Lisa)
Oh, maybe another time.

DEBBIE
No, you go. I could use a few minutes of solitude.

RICK
You sure?

DEBBIE
Yeah, really.

RICK
O.K. I'll be back early.

LISA
Goodnight.

Rick and Lisa go off in another direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. CUTSEY TOWN WITH YOGURT PLACE - NIGHT

Rick and Lisa are eating ice cream cones as they walk down the street.

LISA
...Commercials are more seasonal and also, right now TV shows are on hiatus, still, sometimes I think I might need new agents... I just hate starting all over with new people, I mean, this is my fourteenth agency...God, I keep talking about myself, I'm sorry, it must be so boring.

RICK
Are you kidding? I never knew anyone on TV before.

LISA
You make me feel like such a star. The fact is, I haven't even been on an audition in five months.

RICK
Really? With your looks and talent?

LISA
Thanks, but actually I'm more of a character, so I guess it's harder. Still, you got to have hope. You have to keep telling yourself it'll happen.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "EXPLANATORY STYLE"

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Dr. Shawn is at the podium lecturing the executives. A sign tells us this is a seminar on "Corporate Optimism."

Bruce looks bored but Rick and Lisa are interested.

DOCTOR SHAWN
A rat given uncontrollable shocks learns to be helpless. But what is he thinking? What goes through the rat's head that leads to his depression and passivity?

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT gets shocked and lies quietly.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Does the rat think that the experimenter didn't get laid last night and so he's taking it out on him for a few minutes?

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN
Well, I can't read rats' minds, but I can tell you two things:
(MORE)

DOCTOR SHAWN (cont'd)
First... the rat doesn't realize that only his cage is electrified, to him the whole universe is experiencing shock. Second, he knows nothing he does will stop it. He has no control. Human thoughts of helplessness are more creative but the two important factors are there, pervasive and uncontrollable.

Rick listens and considers this, his thoughts go off on their own tangent.

CUT TO:

INT. BRONX APARTMENT - DAY (1960'S)

Rick's MOTHER is sitting on the fire escape looking depressed. Rick, as a kid, gives his mother some dandelion blossoms.

RICK
I picked you some flowers, Mommy. Can we put them in a vase?

RICK'S MOTHER
There's no stems. You have to have stems to put them in a vase.

Rick takes them to the garbage.

DOCTOR SHAWN (V.O.)
As children we develop explanations for the way we function.

KID RICK V.O.
(throwing out flowers)
Nothing I do is ever right.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The teenage protesters we saw earlier. Rick lectures.

TEENAGE RICK
...What we think doesn't matter. We just don't count.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
This becomes our "explanatory style." A viewpoint of the world.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE IN THE BASEMENT - Rick and teenage Debbie are sitting on the floor talking.

TEENAGE DEBBIE
...You're right, the Student Council sucks.

TEENAGE RICK
That's for sure...do you like pizza?

They smile at each other.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Occasionally we find people whose views coincide with our own.

CUT TO:

INT. PIZZA PLACE - DAY

Debbie and Rick are eating.

RICK
...The military industrial complex and the oil companies control everything. What's the point of these little performances about our grievances.

DEBBIE
You're right. The oil companies suck and there's nothing we can do.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Do we choose these partners because they are like us or because they represent our own negative, helpless feelings and by fighting with them - we fight that part of ourselves.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK & DEBBIE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT
(after dinner with Bruce and Lisa)

DEBBIE
You're never going to beat him. If they can only keep one of you, we're screwed.

RICK
Well thanks, thanks for your support.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICK & DEBBIE'S PATIO - DAY

DEBBIE
I don't think your expertise on radiation is going to scare Bruce.

RICK
Oh, yeah? How can he come up with a summer idea if he doesn't understand the product?

CUT TO:

INT. RICK & DEBBIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DEBBIE
Oh forget it. You're not exactly going to impress him with what a great sportsman you are.

Rick lies in bed listening to her as if he's hearing her for the first time.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICK & DEBBIE'S PATIO - DAY

Rick and Mollie are lying in the hammock.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Can someone unlearn helplessness and see what it's like to have hope?

MOLLIE
I'm going to be a doctor and a mermaid and save everyone with my secret for making skin. Want to hear it?

RICK
Sure. How do you make skin?

MOLLIE
Clay and water. You mix them together till it's the right size and you put it on the wound and it gets all better.

RICK
I don't think clay and water make skin, honey.

MOLLIE
(defiant)
Oh yeah? Did you ever try it?

Rick stares at her, wondering where this confidence comes from. He hugs her.

RICK
You're right. I should try things before I say they won't work.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
The first step is to change the negative inner voice.

INT. RICK AND LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Debbie lies in bed reading "Iron John." She finishes the last page.

DEBBIE
(disgusted)
What shit!

She throws the book at the wall, it hits the doorway, just missing Rick as he enters.

RICK
I see you finished another book.

Debbie gets up, picks up the book and throws it away.

DEBBIE
Remember what Truman Capote said about Jack Kerouac?

Rick sits down.

RICK
No, I was drunk that night.

DEBBIE
He said, "That's not writing, that's typing." Well, this isn't typing, it's word processing.

RICK
Deb, stop marching around and come over here.

She sits down.

RICK
I've been thinking.

DEBBIE
Uh oh.

RICK
Would you say we're happy?

DEBBIE
Sure. Want to see me jump in the air and click my heels?

RICK
Just answer yes or no.

DEBBIE
Well, it's more of an essay question.

RICK
Alright, then can I tell you how I feel?

DEBBIE
Yeah.

RICK
It seems like we play this game of both of us putting me down. I don't know how it started, maybe I manipulate you into doing it. I just know that it's hard to feel love towards you when you're insulting me all the time. I want us to start over... What do you think?

She sighs.

DEBBIE
I guess this is as good a time as any.

RICK
To start over?

DEBBIE
No. For me to tell you something.

RICK
What?

DEBBIE
I've met someone.

RICK
You met them, like you were introduced or you...met them?

DEBBIE
I met them.

Rick thinks for a moment.

RICK
Is that the person who always hangs up when I answer the phone?

DEBBIE
Yeah...how do you like him?

RICK
I think I kind of knew it.

DEBBIE
Have you been seeing anyone?

RICK
Me? You kidding?

DEBBIE
I thought maybe you liked that Lisa.

Rick laughs and shakes his head, "no."

RICK
You know...I feel like a big weight was just taken off my head.

DEBBIE
Maybe it's all for the best.

RICK
Yeah...it's so weird.

DEBBIE
What?

RICK
That that's that.

They sit apart, thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN
Often people re-evaluate their behavior when they're going through stressful events, such as...

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS:

INT. RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Rick holds up Baby Mollie for the camera.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Birth of your child...

CUT TO:

EXT. CURVEY ROAD - DAY

After crashing their cars Bruce and Lisa eye each other.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Falling in love...

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Two RATS in business suits are fighting.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Or change in status at work.

Mike separates the fighting rats.

MIKE
Boys, boys, break it up. This is no time for fighting. We've got a crisis on our hands... Now let's go over this rationally.

When we cut back from Mike, Bruce and Rick are people again.

BRUCE
If we handle the situation Rick's way it will cost this company two-and-a-half to three million dollars, easily.

RICK
(yelling at him)
This isn't something you can cover up with your trendy bullshit. You're playing with people's health here...

Bruce cuts him off.

BRUCE
It's absurd, the dosages are completely out of line.

MIKE
Stop, both of you. Let me read you what will be in the L.A. Times..."The chemical, padamite-O, used in most sunblocks, when administered to rodents over a three-month period was shown to cause a 30 percent rise in skin tumors."

BRUCE
They're talking about a hundred times more than a person would use. Besides, what the hell do rats have to do with people?

RICK
I say we pull all our products off the shelves. In two weeks we'll be back with a new formula.

BRUCE
We're not the only ones with this padomite stuff. Everyone else is gonna sell off the remainder.

Suddenly Mike has turned into Bruce's Father.

BRUCE'S FATHER
So because everyone else is cheating, that makes it right? Huh?

Bruce cowers like a little kid.

BRUCE'S FATHER
If everyone else is shooting dope, then you'll do it? If everyone else is robbing banks you'll try that too? Is that it?

BRUCE
(softly)
No...

BRUCE'S FATHER
Huh? Answer me!

BRUCE
What do you want from me? If I don't do better than everyone else you yell at me. What am I supposed to do? I'm not that great! I can't do it.

Bruce's Father turns back into Mike. Rick has been talking during this time.

RICK
...just like Tylenol did. You get a responsible spokesperson. You pull the product and make sure everyone knows what a loss you're taking, then you're the first on the block with the new safe product and everyone trusts you 'cause you handled it the right way.

MIKE
I think you're right, see about getting on these news shows, pull the product, and write a spiel on the new improved Bloc-Out.

RICK
Great.

Rick leaves the room. Bruce is dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

To calm himself Bruce is reorganizing his shirts from white to light blue to blue to black. Lisa comes in.

LISA
Is something wrong?

BRUCE
Uh uh.

LISA
You know what? Sally is gonna be leaving and she recommended me for her job, and then today, guess what I did?

BRUCE
Rented out every copy of "Regarding Henry."

LISA
No, stupid. I interviewed assistants.

He waits to hear the topper. She waits for an impressed response.

BRUCE
And?...

LISA
That's it. They're going to hire someone to work under me.

BRUCE
So.

LISA
I've never had anyone working for me before.

BRUCE
(looks at clock)
Shit! It's ten-fifteen, I gotta watch the news.

He runs into the living room.

LISA
You hungry?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BRUCE
Yeah, but I gotta see something so bring it in here.

ON THE TV. The NEWSCASTER has a little cartoon box over her shoulder. It shows sunblock with a skull and crossbones on it.

NEWSCASTER
And another trusted product turns out to be a carcinogenic when we return....

The TV cuts to commercials. Lisa brings in tuna salad, bread and sodas. She dances over to the couch and sings along with a commercial. Bruce tries to see around her.

BRUCE
If I want to see middle-aged women dancing I'll put on VH1.

LISA
Screw you.

BRUCE
Shh Shh Shh.

The news returns.

NEWSCASTER
The F.D.A. today reported that padamite-O, a primary ingredient in sunblock, caused an increase of tumors in laboratory animals. A spokesman from Johnson's, the manufacturer of Bloc-Out, was reached for comment.

The TV cuts to a shot of Rick being interviewed.

RICK
...Of course the dosages the F.D.A. refers to far outweigh human usage, but at Johnson's, public health has always been our primary concern. We are pulling Bloc-Out off the market...

Bruce is seething.

RICK
(continuing)
There will be a new Bloc-Out on the shelves in two weeks that will far exceed any F.D.A. standards so the public can be completely secure...

Bruce throws his sandwich at the TV. The tuna slowly drips off Rick's face. Lisa looks surprised.

BRUCE
That's it! That's fuckin' it! I've been too fuckin' nice, not makin' waves, playing by their rules, but that's it. That little weasel has been after me from day one. Well his days are numbered, man. He's fuckin' out of there. That little wimp is history.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

We move through the empty desks and see Bruce, the only one in the building, working in his office. He makes a call.

BRUCE V.O.
Security.

BRUCE
Hey, Paul... can you do me a favor? I need to get into Rick's office a minute. There's some notes we made together and I need them... Yeah, thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S OFFICE - DAY

BRUCE V.O.
Thanks, Paul, I'll lock up.

Bruce enters and sits at Rick's desk. He looks through the files and papers on the desk. He picks up a picture of Rick's kid and laughs snidely, as if he thinks she's ugly. He opens some drawers and is disappointed to find office supplies, a cup, vitamins, etc. Finally, he gets to a drawer that is locked. He fiddles with a paper clip and gets it open.

He reads some notes on "A sunblock designed specifically for kids - colorful packaging - SPF Factor that pediatricians recommend most often -- possible formula changes." Bruce continues reading.

CUT TO:

INT. FURNISHED APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rick cuts a photograph of Mollie and Debbie in half. He puts the Mollie half in a frame and hangs it up in an otherwise completely impersonal room.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Rick teaches Mollie to ride her bicycle without training wheels.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rick pays for his "take-out" dinner and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICK'S OLD HOUSE - DAY

Rick returns Mollie to Debbie. He gives her many goodbye kisses.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Rick peruses the "adult" selection. He picks out a couple and goes to the counter. The Clerk packs one video but the other isn't in its jacket. She calls out.

CLERK
Hey, do we have any copies of "Wet Nurses?"

Rick looks embarrassed.

LISA V.O.
I'll handle it, can you unpack these?

She leaves and Lisa comes over. Rick is shocked to see her. She is delighted.

RICK
Hi!

LISA
Rick! Hi! I've never seen you in here.

RICK
Hi. You work here?

LISA
I'm the manager.

RICK
This is a really different video store, it's real... inviting.

LISA
Yeah? that's what I was going for. We just painted, do you think the colors work?

RICK
Mmm, it's very hip, but friendly.

She's quite proud.

LISA
Thanks... Let's see, what do you have here...

She notices the porno titles but doesn't mention anything.

RICK
Oh, those aren't mine, some young guy put them down.

She doesn't believe it but plays along.

LISA
Oh, which are yours?

RICK
(quickly)
"Henry the Fifth" and "Metropolis."

She looks around but doesn't see them.

LISA
That's funny...

RICK
Gee, maybe the guy took mine.

LISA
Well, he's in for a letdown.

They laugh.

LISA
Come on, I'll get you new copies.

CUT TO:

CAPPUCCINO MACHINE making foam. Lisa gives Rick a cappuccino and they sit at the counter in the back of the store.

RICK
This is great. What a smart idea. People must come in all the time and wind up buying tapes.

LISA
Yeah. And did you see our two-for-one specials with the classics?

RICK
That's why I came in.

She gets up and shows him some racks.

LISA
Over here we're going to have books and magazines for sale. And the shelves all move aside for when we have guest speakers. John Waters is coming next month.

She comes back.

RICK
How did you come up with all this?

LISA
I just put together the kind of place I'd like to go to.

RICK
You've done a great job. I'm really impressed.

She smiles proudly.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce and Lisa are in bed.

LISA
Bruce.

BRUCE
Hmmmm?

LISA
Do you think I'm talented?

BRUCE
How do I know? All I've seen is the muffler commercial.

LISA
You saw my "Good and Evil" episode, you saw the showcase.

BRUCE
I don't know about these things. I'm not in show business.

LISA
But you have to have an opinion.

BRUCE
No, I don't. It's not my area.

LISA
Do you love me?

BRUCE
No. I just like having you sleep over every night and I can't find anyone else to eat dinner with me. Now can I go to sleep?

LISA
Do you think I'm good at anything?

BRUCE
You're great at keeping me up all night.

They shift around to get comfortable.

BRUCE
Hey, did I tell you about the little weasel?

LISA
What?

BRUCE
His wife left him. She's been seeing some guy from her school.

LISA
Oh, that's awful.

BRUCE
He probably stinks in bed.

Bruce starts snoring. Lisa looks thoughtful, considering the possibility of a single Rick.

INT. LAB - DAY

Dr. Shawn watches a RAT pressing a lever (no food comes out).

DOCTOR SHAWN
Nothing is more exciting than intermittent rewards. For rats as well as people. The love of a person we're unsure of, the special luster of a prize that's uncertain. But what happens when the delay period is increased? When rewards become too few and far between?

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "AMBIVALENCE"

CUT TO:

QUICK MONTAGE OF AUDITIONS

Lisa stands near a piano singing. She finishes her song and leaves the stage.

Lisa is in a big empty room across from some network executives. She finishes a dying scene, then gets up and leaves.

Lisa and a group of girls do a dance step. Some names are called out and those people, including Lisa, have to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT sits near the lever, pressing nonchalantly while reading "BACKSTAGE."

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
The connection the mind makes between lever pressing and food rewards becomes less and less powerful. A state of ambi-valence sets in. Even the most persistent rat eventually just gives up.

The rat gets up, puts down "BACKSTAGE," makes a "to-hell-with-this" gesture at the lever and walks off.

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S AGENTS' OFFICE - DAY

Lisa sits across from her agent, CARRIE.

LISA
I'm so glad you asked to have this meeting. I've been so busy at the store that I feel like I haven't stayed on top of things, I haven't called in or anything.

CARRIE
I'm glad you were able to come in. There's a lot happening around here...

Lisa nods, like she wants to hear everything.

CARRIE
It looks like the agency will be merging with Margolis and Caplan.

Lisa nods.

CARRIE
And there are going to be the normal amount of changes, mix-ups and craziness.

Lisa smiles.

CARRIE
Anyway, we're looking at where your career is right now.

Lisa looks interested.

CARRIE
It's an interesting crossroads. You're not an ingenue anymore.

Lisa tries to look like she understands the problem.

CARRIE
And yet you're not really a character either. For the age range you're in, there are already established stars. Michelle, Goldie, Kathleen...it's a difficult time.

Lisa begins to fear this is going to be bad.

CARRIE
Anyway, you must have noticed that we haven't been able to send you out at all lately.

Lisa tries to cover how she is feeling.

CARRIE
I'm sure it's very frustrating to you and you've probably been thinking that you'd be happier at a smaller agency.

Lisa's expression turns numb.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

Lisa is in the cage pressing on the lever, nothing comes out and she grows weary. The pressing is INTERCUT with Carrie's speech at the agency.

CARRIE
I know you know it's nothing personal, we all love you so much. You're so unique. There's no one like you. It's going to take a very special handling, but I know you'll find it. We really wish you the best of luck...

Lisa gets exhausted. She stops pressing the lever and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. AGENCY OFFICE - DAY

Lisa gets up and they shake hands.

CARRIE
(indicating Lisa's 8x10's)
Oh, don't forget these.

LISA
Thanks.

Lisa takes her pictures and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. AGENCY - DAY

It is one of those windy, Santa Ana days. Lisa exits and walks to a trash can. She tries to throw her pictures out but a bunch of them go flying away. Pictures of her smiling face skip down the block as others get caught in trees or go straight up into the sky. Lisa laughs at seeing her face all over the place. She lets the rest of the pictures go.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STORE - DAY

Lisa comes in and puts away her purse.

LISA
Hi, kids.

SALES CLERK
Hi, boss.

The cash register is rung up. The bell RINGS. Lisa smiles at being called "BOSS."

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick has a number of sketches for a campaign aimed at children. His assistants and other executives are with him going through some notes.

RICK
...the pediatricians mostly fall into the fifteen to twenty-five area, but like grownups, it depends on the child's skin...

Marianne sticks her head in.

MARIANNE
Mike wants you in on his four o'clock.

RICK
Damn it.

He gets up to go.

RICK
Sorry. I'll be right back.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

The room is covered with full color ads for "KIDZBLOC." Some aimed at children, some geared towards parents. Mike has some prototype containers. Bruce sits casually on Mike's desk. Rick enters and takes it all in. The BUZZING sound that accompanies SHOCK is heard. We move in on Rick's face as he realizes he's been ripped off.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

Rick is in a cage being SHOCKED. From far away we rush in on him quickly. He covers his ears and SCREAMS. He looks over and sees Bruce being placed in the cage. Rick looks like he's going to kill Bruce.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

RICK
(calmly)
Bruce, can I talk to you a moment, outside?

BRUCE
Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Rick slams Bruce against the wall.

RICK
You overdressed, smiling, sack of shit. You stole my idea.

Bruce gets free of him easily and straightens out his suit.

BRUCE
I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

RICK
You knew I was working on a kid's sunblock. You've been spying on me.

BRUCE
You think I give a fuck about you and your little bonehead projects?

He goes back into Mike's office. Rick tries to figure out what to do.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick comes back in.

RICK
Mike, I don't want to sound like a squealer but this whole "Kidzbloc" concept was my idea. We were just getting ready to present it.

BRUCE
I can understand how frustrated Rick must feel if he was thinking of something similar but the truth is, I saw Coppertone had "pediatrician recommended" on their number twenty so I thought, "Why not take it a step further and really push the kid angle."

Mike nods. Rick looks disgusted.

BRUCE
I feel silly defending it, but I guess Rick feels a little crazed, what with the problems at home and all.

Rick is amazed he'd bring that up.

MIKE
It's a great idea, I'm not surprised you both had it, but Bruce you really ran with it...

Bruce acts modest. Rick stares at him.

MIKE
Alright, we've finally got our big summer push. I want market research on where to put on TV spots, how to place the kid and parent print ads...

As he continues Rick looks trapped and miserable.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce is asleep, sprawled on top of the bed in his suit. Lisa stares at him. She shakes him awake.

LISA
You want to take off your suit before you go to sleep?

He takes it off while still asleep and she hangs it up.

LISA
Mike called.

BRUCE
What'd you say?

LISA
I told him you were asleep.

Suddenly he's wide awake.

BRUCE
What'd you say that for?

LISA
You're lying in bed with your eyes closed. What should I call that? Car trouble?

He goes into the bathroom and washes his face.

BRUCE
I hate that. I hate anyone thinking about me sleeping.

LISA
O.K. I'll never tell anyone you're sleeping again.

BRUCE
Man, you should've seen Rick's face today. I knew he was getting ready to present his children's line so I really hustled and when he saw me beat him to it -- it looked like he was going to kill himself...what a loser.

LISA
How am I supposed to react to that?

BRUCE
How are you supposed to react? Gee, how about proud? How about the way I react when your commercials are on?

He flosses his teeth. She comes over.

LISA
Bruce, I think I'm changing.

BRUCE
Yeah, into what?

LISA
Would you come to my shrink with me?

He makes a disgusted face.

BRUCE
No way!

LISA
You might find it interesting. You might find ways to not be so angry all the time.

BRUCE
I like being angry all the time.

LISA
But don't you find some of your games aren't working?

He scrapes his teeth with dental tools.

BRUCE
Everything I'm doing is working just fine.

LISA
That's why you talk to your clothes and stock up on snack food for imaginary friends.

He ignores her and carefully hangs up his suit.

BRUCE
If Mike calls, we were talking about having them over for dinner so see when you can work it out.

LISA
I told you I have to go up to San Francisco next week to supervise the new store.

BRUCE
So, do it around that.

LISA
But I've got to get the rest of the events scheduled before I leave.

He starts to brush with his electric toothbrush.

BRUCE
I thought you were going to get new brushes for the "Interplack."

LISA
Don't you listen to me? I'm not your mother. I've got a business to run.

BRUCE
Oh, so we've officially switched careers, have we? I was wondering how long it would take till you gave up.

He takes off his shirt and socks.

LISA
I've chosen to work somewhere that I have job security, where they appreciate my ideas and where I've been given some authority. I'd call that growing up not giving up.

BRUCE
Call it whatever you like. I'm just glad video clerks don't have to discuss what agency to be with all day.

He gets into the shower.

LISA
Hey, we're not through with this talk.

BRUCE
(from shower)
I can't hear you.

LISA
I'm leaving. I'm going crazy living here. I've already started looking for an apartment.

BRUCE
(not hearing)
Uh huh.

LISA
And I want custody of the shirts. You can see them on weekends.

She leaves the room.

BRUCE
Lisa, could you get me my new shampoo, it's in the living room...Lisa! Lisa! Goddamit, where are you?

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH DEPT. - DAY

Rick is working on the new formula with STEVE, a research guy.

STEVE
You're not going to like what I have to tell you.

RICK
How bad can it be?

STEVE
The formula's going to take at least another month.

RICK
Let me see the patch tests.

Steve gives him some tests.

RICK
Alpha hydrozy? Isn't that fruit acid?

STEVE
Yeah.

RICK
What were you hoping to accomplish with that?

STEVE
I thought loosening cells in the stratum corneum would give an even tone but the shedding epidermis makes the skin paler.

RICK
How does it stack up compared to hydroquinone?

STEVE
Just as effective, and it's natural.

RICK
Baby boomers are ready for age spots...too bad we're not in the fade cream business.

Debbie is suddenly by his side.

DEBBIE
Oh right, and I suppose you're going to start your own company now.

RICK
What are you doing here? I thought I was rid of you.

DEBBIE
Negativity doesn't go away that easily. Just remember, you've always worked for other people, you don't have any experience raising money, loans are very hard to get now and it would probably fail.

Rick loses his resolve. Steve has not seen or heard Debbie. He puts away the tests.

STEVE
Anyway, back to the drawing board.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Rick is at the counter in the back, drinking coffee and reading a dermatology newsletter. He sneaks looks at Lisa. She comes over, he looks up and smiles.

LISA
Hi.

RICK
Hi.

She sits down next to him.

LISA
I got the Rocky and Bullwinkle you asked for.

RICK
Oh great, thanks.

LISA
How's Mollie?

RICK
Wonderful. I just dropped her off... How's Bruce?

LISA
Bruce?... Bruce who?

RICK
Bruce, you know, good-looking, nice clothes...

LISA
Bruce Fleming? I haven't seen him in weeks.

RICK
What do you mean?

LISA
We broke up.

Rick is surprised, he tries not to look too happy.

RICK
You broke up?

LISA
It's amazing, isn't it? We seemed so well suited. I mean, I love banging my head against the wall and him being such a great wall...

RICK
So you're O.K. about it.

LISA
It's great. I've got a cute apartment on Main. I walk to work.

A CLERK comes by and clears the cups.

CLERK
We're closing in five minutes.

RICK
(to Lisa)
Can I walk you home.

LISA
Sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN AVE. - DUSK

Two inexpensive extras (dressed as Rick and Lisa) walk down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S FURNISHED RENTAL APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place is inherently bland but Lisa has imposed some flamboyant decorating that make it fun and homey. She gives Rick a tour, as if the place was a lot grander.

LISA
...Eat-in kitchen (not) breakfast nook, (the sink) library (a book), den (couch), formal dining room, master bedroom, master bath...

RICK
(playing along)
You've done wonders with it. Did you work with a decorator?

LISA
No, it's just another one of my many talents.

They walk to the door.

RICK
So, we're on for dinner as soon as you're back from San Francisco?

LISA
I'd love that.

RICK
O.K. I'll see you.

LISA
Bye.

He gives her a peck "goodbye" kiss. They look at each other, both knowing they want more. Then they kiss for real. He is ecstatic. She is worried.

LISA
Rick...

He's afraid something is wrong.

RICK
What?

LISA
I'm thirty-eight.

He's totally confused, wondering what that has to do with anything and how to respond.

RICK
I'm 5'7".

Now she's confused.

LISA
What I mean is, I, uh, think I'm a little older than you.

RICK
You are, but I think I'm a little shorter.*

LISA
Oh, O.K... well, bye.

RICK
Bye.

He leaves. She shuts the door, remembers the kiss and smiles. The door KNOCKS. She opens it and Rick is there.

RICK
You know, there's something bothering me. I'm afraid a part of you might think that I just kissed you 'cause I'm trying to get back at Bruce somehow. But I gotta tell you, I've been thinking about doing that for quite some time now.

LISA
You have?

RICK
Yeah, so I just wanted you to know that.

He goes away. She closes the door, thinks about how strange he acts but she doesn't want him to go. She opens the door and calls out to him.

*or heavier, or losing his hair or whatever (depending on casting).

LISA
Rick!

He's back in a second, he grabs her and they kiss for awhile. Romantic MUSIC COMES UP.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S CONDO - DAY (ASSORTED SHOTS)

The romantic music plays on an old movie video. Bruce ejects it and tosses it in a bag. He goes around his apartment tossing in a stack of Lisa's head shots, some toiletries from the bathroom, some clothes left in a drawer and some unsightly wire hangers from the closet. He opens one cabinet and recoils, then pulls out a wig (he thought was an animal).

Bruce has three neat bags. "Goodwill," "Garbage," and "Recycle."

EXT. BRUCE'S CONDO - DAY

Bruce leaves the "Goodwill" bag by the door. He dumps the "Recycle" bag in a receptacle, then throws the "Garbage" bag away and slams down the lid.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The traffic is at a standstill.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY

Bruce looks extremely depressed. He isn't paying attention to the road. Loud HONKING brings him back.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The honking truck passes Bruce. The DRIVER yells at him.

DRIVER
Wake up asshole.

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY

Frustrated and angry, Bruce bangs around and hits his steering wheel.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

Bruce is trapped in the cage. He starts to get SHOCKED. He SCREAMS and hits the bars with his cellular phone.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY

Bruce sees something.

CUT TO:

His P.O.V. - The truck that passed him has a bumper sticker that reads, "How'm I driving?" with a phone number.

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY

Bruce dials the number on his car phone.

VOICE
Eastman, Pat speaking.

BRUCE
Yes, I'm calling about your driver.

VOICE
You're kidding.

BRUCE
I wish I were. The man's a menace. He almost ran over an elderly lady and didn't even stop. You're lucky the police didn't see.

VOICE
Who is this?

BRUCE
Just a concerned pedestrian. I think your guy is drunk or something.

VOICE
Drunk?

BRUCE
He was swerving all over the place.

VOICE
Well, thanks very much. We'll take care of it.

BRUCE
My pleasure.

He hangs up and is considerably calmer.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rick comes in. He notices that Bruce isn't there for a change.

RICK
What's up?

MIKE
Rick, I have an offer to discuss with you.

Rick is pleasantly surprised.

MIKE
It involves a slight increase in salary...

RICK
Uh huh...

MIKE
The boys in the valley have discussed it and we would like you to run the production end of the sun-bloc division.

Rick is confused.

RICK
But... I am running the production of sun-bloc. Me and Bruce oversee production, marketing and distribution...

MIKE
(cuts him off)
That's just it. You're really a technician, you're great with research and development, you're on top of production, you've been a real workhorse and it's appreciated. But Bruce is more of a tiger and that's what they feel the company needs now.

Rick is stunned.

RICK
You want me to work under Bruce?

MIKE
We don't look at it that way. You'd have complete control of production... but Bruce would be running the department.

RICK
(it's still sinking in)
In other words I'm demoted...

MIKE
Your value hasn't gone unnoticed, you'd have less work to do for more money.

RICK
And I'd be working under Bruce...

MIKE
Think it over.

Rick seems to be in a daze. WE MOVE IN on him till we can almost go inside his head.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - "LEARNING"

INT. LAB - DAY

DOCTOR SHAWN
Are we just a mass of responses programmed in early life and totally predictable afterwards? Is change even possible, or...

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Bruce, Rick and Lisa, dressed as children, are in the same class.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
...Is who we are in childhood, who we are forever?

Lisa is doodling and daydreaming. Bruce and Rick are at the same desk. Bruce is angry and he tries to elbow Rick away. Rick is annoyed.

KID BRUCE
Gimme some room.

KID RICK
Cut it out.

CUT TO:

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
But what if the environment changes?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (AT RETREAT - FLASHBACK)

Rick is embarrassed as Debbie mouths off in front of everyone. Dr. Shawn is at the table with them.

DOCTOR SHAWN
If, say, what was once bad turns good...

CUT TO:

INT. SAME RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Now Rick is sitting with Lisa, who is impressing Mike and being affectionate to Rick.

DOCTOR SHAWN
And must we wait for these changes in our lives or can therapy, support groups and role models have any effect...?

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

A RAT gets a SHOCK but doesn't attempt to leave. ANOTHER RAT, next to the exit calls out to him.

RAT
Hey! Over here! Come on!

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

RICK
Let me get this straight. I've been here nine years, sales have consistently grown in spite of the recession, I'm in the office ten hours a day and now you're telling me since I'm a horse instead of a tiger, I have to hang around and make Bruce look good?

MIKE
That's a very skewered way of looking at our offer. If you stop and think it over you'll see you really should take it... believe me, Rick, you should take it.

Rick looks off for awhile.

QUICK CUTS

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Debbie is at the table with Rick.

DEBBIE
Take it.

INT. LAB - DAY

The RAT is getting SHOCKED.

MIKE V.O.
Take it.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Mourners stand in a group and talk to Kid Rick.

MOURNERS
Take it.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - DAY

Rick's mother waves him away.

MOTHER
Take it.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A COP hands him a ticket.

COP
Take it.

INT. RESTAURANT

A WAITRESS hands him a plate of slop.

WAITRESS
Take it.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rick and Debbie are reading in bed when the phone RINGS. Rick answers.

MALE V.O.
Take it.
(click)

Rick looks suspicious, Debbie looks like she's reading.

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE - DAY

Rick is being SHOCKED. Lisa calls out from the exit.

LISA
Hey, look! You can get out!
(She waves him over)
Come on.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

RICK
No.

MIKE
What?

RICK
No. No, I don't have to take it. There is no reason in the world why I have to take it.

Mike is stunned. Rick leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bruce oversees men carrying in his jukebox.

BRUCE
Watch it, watch it.

Marianne comes in.

BRUCE
(to her)
What do you think?

She looks around.

MARIANNE
Now you've got a really good view of the smog... Mike wants you.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAYS - DAY

Bruce walks with assurance, greeting various workers.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Some people cling desperately to their neurotic behavior. They think it is responsible for anything positive in their lives...

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bruce enters and sits.

MIKE
I've got some bad news. Rick resigned today.

Bruce does a great job of looking miserable.

BRUCE
Oh no, that's awful... He was a great technician.

MIKE
I know. Anyway, Frank has someone he'd like you to use as your assistant. He doesn't know everything Rick knew, but with some training you'll be able to give over some of your responsibilities.

BRUCE
Sure.

Out of a corner that Bruce didn't notice comes an earnest YOUNG MAN.

MIKE
Great, well, Paul, this is Bruce Fleming...

Bruce is shocked that he was there. He's not too pleased with being given an assistant.

MIKE
Bruce, this is Paul Johnson.

They shake hands.

BRUCE
(laughs)
Johnson, wouldn't be any relation, would you?

PAUL
Nephew.

Bruce continues shaking his hand, his smile is frozen on his face but he's clearly not happy.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Some people would rather endlessly replay an uncomfortable but familiar scenario than try anything new.

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS Bruce approaches and shakes hands with...

A YOUNG ASIAN MAN.

A BLACK MAN.

A WOMAN.

A TEENAGER.

Bruce continues smiling and shaking hands.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE INDUSTRIAL SPACE - DAY

Lisa and Rick are being shown around by a REAL ESTATE AGENT.

RICK
What's the square footage?

REAL ESTATE GUY
Twenty-one hundred.

RICK
What about power?

REAL ESTATE GUY
There's outlets on the floor every ten feet.

He leaves them to look around.

RICK
What do you think? The new corporate headquarters of the world's largest fade cream empire. And I owe it all to you.

LISA
I have a very good feeling about this.

RICK
(puts his arm around her)
Me, too. Unless, of course, it's a huge failure and I lose all my money and I go into debt and you leave me and I get sick...

LISA
Will you cut it out.

RICK
Boy, change is scary.

LISA
Scary is good...

They make exaggerated "scared" faces and hug each other.

DOCTOR SHAWN V.O.
Breaking away from your patterns is a frightening prospect. But, what are the alternatives?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Over "PRESSURE" by Queen we see Bruce's car smash into...

A Volvo with a crisp businesswoman

A station wagon with a young housewife.

A Corvette with a sexy blonde.

A Jeep with a trendy-type.

We move over to the next lane where Rick and Lisa are stopped at a light. Mollie is in the back seat holding a white rat.

RICK
Mol, put Joey back in his cage.

MOLLIE
I can't, I love him too much.

He watches her in the rear view mirror. The light turns green. Bruce gets out of his car to fight with his latest female driver as Rick and Lisa's car drives away.

FADE OUT.

THE END